

2 . THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

The Housing Strategy is set within the national, regional and local context and is based upon improved local information and housing data.

2.1 The main housing issues in East Devon - summary

The main issues and problems to be tackled in the district can be summarised as:

- homelessness and a significant need for more affordable housing
- high cost of owner occupation and private renting
- limited opportunities for building new affordable housing
- high numbers of second homes and holiday homes
- low wage economy, with seasonal work related to tourism and agriculture
- high migration into the district particularly from retired households
- poor housing conditions in the private sector
- high demand for adaptations for disabled people
- standards in houses in multiple occupation needing to be improved
- empty properties which need to be used
- people with special needs requiring support
- improvements to energy efficiency, especially in the private sector
- fuel poverty and delivering affordable warmth
- ensuring all housing meets and exceeds the Decent Homes Standard
- improving sustainability, place shaping and eliminating social exclusion
- tenant profiling, equality and diversity assessments
- young people's housing issues
- tackling antisocial behaviour where it occurs.

Overall, we wish to ensure that the housing needs of the district's residents are met, with priority given to those people who are least able to satisfy their own housing needs.

2.2 Partnership Working

We recognise that the success of our strategic housing role and the delivery of our housing aims lie, in part, with the contribution of local and regional partners. The table below shows our key partners.

National	Regional
County	Local
Communities and Local Government ¹	This government department sets policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue.
Government Office for the South West (GoSW) ²	The Government Office representing central government in the South West. We are committed to maintaining effective links with GoSW and keeping them apprised of new initiatives and developments.
Regional Housing Body for the South West ³	This Body sets housing in the wider strategic context of planning and economic growth. It identifies the priorities for housing in our region and makes recommendations to Ministers on the allocation of capital investment.

¹ www.communities.gov.uk

² www.gosw.gov.uk

³ www.southwesthousingbody.org.uk

Devon Strategic Housing Group ⁴	A single Housing Partnership comprising the seven district councils, the National Park, Torbay Council, Exeter and Plymouth City Councils, Devon County Council and Housing Associations and the Community Council of Devon working together to improve the delivery of affordable housing in Devon.
Wider Housing Strategic Partnership	Established in 2003 as a means of creating the housing element of the East Devon Sustainable Community Plan ⁵ . It acts as a 'sounding board' and discussion forum for housing issues in the district. The partnership is an important part of our consultation arrangements with housing partners. A list of the members of the partnership is given in Annex 2 .
Registered Social Landlords	Housing Associations with housing stock in East Devon.

We seek to resolve the challenges of the housing market by working jointly with partner organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors, so sharing resources and increasing our own capacity through combined service delivery. While reaping the benefits of sharing good practice with other organisations, we are also able to represent the views of East Devon residents at local, regional, and national levels, ensuring their voice is heard beyond our own district.

2.3 National, regional and local strategies

National Indicators	A single set of 198 national indicators introduced in April 2008. They represent what the Government believes are the national priorities for local government, working alone or in partnership, over the next three years.
Housing Corporation Corporate Plan 2005-2008 ⁶	This sets out how the Housing Corporation will continue to meet housing and community needs and aspirations, and lead and stimulate innovation. It has four core objectives: more quality homes, improving landlord performance, providing expertise, and building a 'can-do' culture.
Creating Sustainable Communities in the South West ⁷	Produced by the GoSW - identifies issues which contribute towards thriving and inclusive communities.
South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016 ⁸ ,	Vision - 'To work in partnership to ensure that everyone has access to a good quality home within a sustainable and inclusive community'. Its aims are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the balance of housing markets • achieving good quality homes • supporting sustainable communities.

⁴ www.dshg.org.uk

⁵ East Devon Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2016 – East Devon Local Strategic Partnership

⁶ www.housingcorp.gov.uk

⁷ Creating Sustainable Communities in the South West January 2005 – Government Office for the South West

⁸ South West Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2016 – www.southwesthousingbody.org.uk

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 ⁹	The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) will set a regional planning framework to 2026 about 'where things go', what the scale of development should be, and the links between broad issues like healthcare, education and crime, as well as basic infrastructure such as transport. As at August 2008 Communities and Local Government had issued proposed changes (for consultation) to the draft RSS.
The Devon Local Area Agreement ¹⁰	Local areas agree key indicators from the 198 national indicators. Devon has agreed 38 key targets some directly housing related such as LAA 23 (increasing housing delivery in East Devon), LAA 26 (increasing the delivery of affordable housing), and LAA 27 (improve housing options for homeless and vulnerable clients), and others where housing may play a role such as LAA33 (reduce fuel poverty). (see below for further details)
East Devon Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2016 ¹¹	This aims to improve quality of life in East Devon by promoting the social, economic and physical well being of our communities. It forms the overarching strategic plan for East Devon that other strategies and plans should accord with.
East Devon District Council's Corporate Strategy ¹²	Contains a small number of top level priorities captured under seven headings - affordable homes - safe, clean and green environment - children and young people - excellent service for our customers - thriving economy - recycling - an inspirational council Within these areas there are some key housing targets and these have been included within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
East Devon Local Development Framework*	The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the generic term that encompasses a range of plans (including the East Devon Local Plan, the emerging Core Strategy*, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning documents) that will guide, regulate and manage development over the years ahead. LDF documents will play a key role in identifying sites and setting out policy and proposals for future housing development.
30 year HRA Business Plan*	This sets out the mission and objectives we will adopt in managing and maintaining the council housing stock.
Housing Service Plan 2008-11*	This sets out previous achievements, performance indicators, efficiencies, consultations and the service's contribution to the Corporate Strategy.
Tenant and Council Partnership Agreement*	This agreement sets out how tenants can have a voice in the housing services and be involved in decision making at all levels within the Council.
East Devon Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2005-08	This sets out the priorities, actions and delivery tools to address the need for private sector housing renewal in East Devon.

* available on our website www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Local Area Agreements (LAA)

⁹ www.southwest-ra.gov.uk

¹⁰ Draft Devon Local Area Agreement 2008-2011, May 2008, Devon Strategic Partnership – www.devon.gov.uk/local_area_agreement

¹¹ East Devon Sustainable Community Plan 2006-2016 – East Devon Local Strategic Partnership

¹² East Devon Corporate Strategy December 2007 – www.eastdevon.gov.uk

The 2006 Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'¹³ strengthened the role of local councils as 'place shapers' giving them greater flexibility to respond to the needs of local communities. It enhanced the role of LAAs and requires councils to take the lead in partnership working to set locally agreed priorities and targets. The LAA is a contract between central and local government, and Devon County Council is the accountable body negotiating its terms, on behalf of all the district authorities in 'New Devon'. There is a delivery plan for each priority which sets out the targets and actions that can support and strengthen delivery. The LAA aims to enable identification of what needs to be done to improve life for local people and to make it happen by pooling money that is currently held by different organisations. How we achieve targets within the LAA will also form part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment which will replace Local Authority Comprehensive Performance Appraisals in 2009.

2.4 District Profile

- East Devon currently has the largest population of Devon's seven district councils.
- Situated on the Devon coast in South West England, between River Exe and outskirts of Exeter (to west), Somerset (inland) and Dorset (to east).
- 314 square miles in area.
- At the extremes it is 30 miles east to west and 15 miles north to south.
- Transport links include Exeter International Airport, main line rail services and national motorway network.
- Exmouth is the district's largest settlement (population of over 35,500).
- Other larger coastal resorts include Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth and Seaton.
- Inland areas are mainly rural with the main settlements being Honiton, Ottery St Mary and Axminster.

During 2008/09 the Boundary Commission will be considering proposals to alter the district boundaries of the county and this may have significant impact on the provision of housing within the area.

2.5 Population Profile

- Population in 2007 was 131,200 – 62,500 males and 68,700 females.
- Death rate exceeds birth rate.
- 12% population rise over last 10 years due to significant inward migration (2006/07 – inflow of 9,281 households and outflow of 5,580).
- 54% of the population is over age of 45 – with the third highest proportion of persons of retirement age in the whole country.
- 65-74 age group predicted to rise by 47% by 2010.
- BME groups form a low proportion of population (0.7%), with highest proportion being Chinese.
- 22% of the adult population are single, 57% are married, 10% separated or divorced, and 11% widowed.
- Benefit receipt rate of 15% is at a slightly lower rate than the national rate of 17%.
- 28% of private rented sector receive benefits compared to 13% of owner occupiers.

2.6 Profile of East Devon council tenants

¹³ Strong and prosperous communities – The Local Government White Paper October 2006

During 2008 we will be carrying out a tenant profiling exercise to gather more information about the make up of our tenants. However the Census 2001¹⁴ and 2003 and 2006 STATUS surveys provide a considerable amount of information on the East Devon tenant profile. The key facts are:

- The age profile of council tenants is broadly similar to that in the general East Devon population.
- A smaller proportion of tenants are aged 45-59 (15%) than in the general population (20%).
- 27% of tenants reported having a limiting long-term illness compared to 19% in the general population.
- 14% of tenants described their health status as 'not good' (8.31% of general population).
- 98% of tenants identified themselves as White British.
- 23% reported having an annual income of between £5,200 and £8,319 (2006 STATUS survey).
- 44% of tenants were retired.
- 30% of all tenant households are single person of pensionable age (compared to 20% of East Devon as whole).

2.7 Housing Profile

- There are a total of 62,609 dwellings in the district of which 10% are owned either by the Council or a RSL.
- 48% have been constructed since 1964 (higher than the national average).
- 24% are detached houses (higher than the national average).
- The proportion of 'two adult' and 'lone older' householders are higher than the national average.
- 0.9% are houses in multiple occupation (lower than the national average).
- As at April 2008 the council housing stock was 4298 properties.
- Right to buy sales have fallen in recent years, with only 4 sales in 2007/08.
- The average weekly council rent for 2007/08 was £56.49 and for 2008/09 will be £59.73 (taking all property types into account).
- The average property price in 2007 was £259,213.
- The average salary in 2007 was £21,700, but taking account of those not in full time work the average household income is less than £15,000.
- 12% of all established households are living in unsuitable accommodation.

The East Devon housing data shows a housing profile where the housing stock is generally in good condition but with pockets of disrepair and need for improvement or adaptation in the private sector.

The main issue that emerges from the profiling work is the need for more affordable housing because the high housing costs in the district are beyond the reach of those households on average, and in some cases above average incomes. This is compounded by the holiday or second home market, low wage economy, in-migration of wealthy retirees, small private rented sector, and reduced stock of local authority and housing association homes.

¹⁴ Census 2001 Devon – www.devon.gov.uk

Influences on the Housing Strategy

